

IUP CO-OP RECREATIONAL PARK MAINTENANCE UNDERWAY

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INDIANA, Pa. – As part of the care and stewardship of Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Student Cooperative Association's Co-op Recreational Park, the Co-op Association's Board of Directors is in an agreement with Millstone Land Management for an assessment and appropriate professional forestry and land stewardship services.

The Co-op Recreational Park is a 280-acre property located in White Township. It is private property, owned and maintained by the Student Cooperative Association and funded by IUP student activity fees. The property is open for use by any IUP I-card holder (I-cards are given to students and others who pay the Student Activity Fee); buildings must be reserved by an I-card holder.

"The Co-op Recreational Park is an incredible resource for IUP, and we are committed to its continued health and the safety of visitors using the property," IUP Student Co-op CEO Lou Garzarelli said. "Like any property, the Park requires assessment and maintenance, especially in light of storms, including winter storms, that damage the trails," he said.

"Millstone Land Management's work will maintain and enhance our existing forest trails and surrounding woodland areas with a focus on safety, accessibility, aesthetics, and sustainable recreational use," he said.

The project has four phases; the current phase, assessment and survey work, is underway. Phases two through four include:

- Hazardous tree identification removal and mitigation along trails, roadways and commonly used areas
- Trail maintenance, including clearing and grading and drainage improvements;
- Vegetation management along trails to improve visibility, safety and user experience
- Selective thinning and pruning to improve forest health, aesthetics and sightlines and invasive species control within trail corridors and adjacent forest areas
- Erosion control and soil stabilization along existing trails, using best management practices
- Debris removal and cleanup related to storm damage
- Aesthetic improvements to enhance the visual quality and natural character of the forested landscape.

“As the project concludes next year, we will also receive a final assessment of forest health, trail conditions, and recommendations for future maintenance or stewardship activities,” Garzarelli said.

The Student Cooperative Association was organized in 1933; some of the major functions of the Co-op have been to provide financial assistance for extracurricular activities, maintain recreational and service facilities (including the Co-op Park and the Hadley Union Building) as well as operate the campus store.